

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend claims 1-19, and **add** new claim 20, as shown in the complete list of claims that is presented below.

1. (currently amended) An additionalimage information processing apparatus comprising:

an image acquisition component which acquires input image data from a printed medium in which additionalimage information is embedded;

an extracting component which extracts the additionalimage information from the input image data; and

an additionalimage information modification component which generates new additionalimage information by modifying the additionalimage information when ~~determining that the~~ additionalimage information complies with a predetermined condition, and generates copied image data by embedding the new additionalimage information into ~~the input image data or~~ image data obtained by removing the additionalimage information from the input image data.

2. (currently amended) The additionalimage information processing apparatus according to Claim 1, wherein:

said additionalimage information contains copy control information for limiting an allowable number of times the input image data is copied; and

when determining that the copy control information contains a variable value representing permission to copy the input image data, said additionalimage information modification component generates the new additionalimage information by modifying the variable value and generates the copied image data.

3. (currently amended) The additionalimage information processing apparatus according to Claim 2, wherein said additionalimage information modification component

determines that the copy control information contains the variable value representing permission to copy the input image data when the variable value is within a predetermined range.

4. (currently amended) The additionalimage information processing apparatus according to Claim 2, wherein said additionalimage information modification component modifies the variable value by a smaller amount with a higher level of access authorization of a user, and modifies the variable value by a larger amount with a lower level of the access authorization level of a user.

5. (currently amended) The additionalimage information processing apparatus according to Claim 2, further comprising a recording component which stores the additionalimage information extracted by said extracting component, wherein:

when determining that the additionalimage information contains a flag value representing image data of an original file and the same additionalimage information is not stored in said recording component, said additionalimage information modification component generates the new additionalimage information to write the generated new additionalimage information into the recording component and generates the copied image data;

when determining that the additionalimage information contains a flag value representing the image data of an original file and that the same additionalimage information is stored in said recording component, said additionalimage information modification component modifies the variable value that is contained within the additionalimage information stored in said recording component, and generates the new additionalimage information and the copied image data; and

when determining that the additionalimage information contains a flag value not representing the image data of an original file, said additionalimage information modification component does not generate the copied image data.

6. (currently amended) The additionalimage information processing apparatus according to Claim 1, wherein, when determining that the additionalimage information contains a flag value representing image data of an original file, said additionalimage information modification component generates the new additionalimage information by changing the flag value to a value not representing image data of an original file, and generates the copied image data.

7. (currently amended) The additionalimage information processing apparatus according to Claim 1, wherein, when determining that a level of access authorization of a user is equal to or larger than a predetermined level, said additionalimage information modification component can provide the copied image data having the same additionalimage information as that of the input image data, without generating the new additionalimage information.

8. (currently amended) The additionalimage information processing apparatus according to Claim 1, wherein said additionalimage information modification component generates the new additionalimage information by adding personal identification information of a user to the additionalimage information.

9. (currently amended) The additionalimage information processing apparatus according to Claim 1, wherein said additionalimage information modification component generates the new additionalimage information by adding identification information of a system to the additionalimage information, and said additionalimage information processing apparatus is integrated in said system.

10. (currently amended) An additionalimage information processing system comprising:

an additionalimage information processing apparatus according to Claim 1;
a scanner which obtains the input image data by optically scanning a printed medium in which the additionalimage information is embedded; and

a printer which prints out the copied image data.

11 (currently amended): The ~~additional~~image information processing system according to Claim 10, further comprising a data receiving unit which receives image data transmitted through a communication line and provides the received image data to the image acquisition component.

12. (currently amended) The ~~additional~~image information processing system according to Claim 10, further comprising a data sending unit which sends the copied image data to said communication line.

13. (currently amended) The ~~additional~~image information processing system according to Claim 10, further comprising a display unit which displays one or both of the ~~additional~~image information extracted by said extracting component and the new ~~additional~~image information.

14. (currently amended): ~~An additional~~The image information processing system comprising:

an ~~additional~~image information processing apparatus according to Claim 8; and
an information reading unit which reads personal identification information from a recording medium storing the personal identification information of a user, and provides the read personal identification information to said ~~additional~~image information processing apparatus.

15. (currently amended) ~~An additional~~The image information processing system comprising:

an ~~additional~~image information processing apparatus according to Claim 4; and
an information reading unit which reads access authorization from a recording medium storing the access authorization of a user, and provides the read access authorization to said ~~additional~~image information processing apparatus.

16. (currently amended) An additionalimage information processing method comprising the steps of:

(a) ~~acquiring~~ input image data from a printed medium in which additionalimage information is embedded;

(b) ~~extracting~~ the additionalimage information from the input image data;

(c) ~~determining~~ whether or not the extracted additionalimage information complies with a predetermined condition; and

(d) ~~generating~~ new additionalimage information by modifying the additionalimage information when it is determined ~~in said step (c)~~ that the additionalimage information complies with said predetermined condition, and generating copied image data by embedding the new additionalimage information into ~~the input image data or~~ image data obtained by removing the additionalimage information from the input image data.

17. (currently amended) The additionalimage information processing apparatus according to Claim 3, wherein said additionalimage information modification component modifies the variable value by a smaller amount with a higher level of access authorization of a user, and modifies the variable value by a larger amount with a lower level of the access authorization level of a user.

18. (currently amended) The additionalimage information processing system according to Claim 11, further comprising a data sending unit which sends the copied image data to said communication line.

19. (currently amended) An additionalimage information processing system comprising:

an additionalimage information processing apparatus according to Claim 7; and

an information reading unit which reads access authorization from a recording medium storing the access authorization of a user, and provides the read access authorization to said additionalimage information processing apparatus.

20. (new) The image information processing apparatus according to Claim 1, wherein the new image information is embedded to the printed medium as a background pattern.